United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Safford Field Office
Safford, AZ

Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-AZ-G010-2013-0026-EA

White Spring Permit Renewal

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1.0 Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of the proposed grazing permit renewal for the White Spring allotment #46280 (Figure 1). The action culminates an evaluation conducted on the allotment under the Arizona Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (S&Gs). In addition, this EA determines if current grazing management practices would maintain desirable conditions and continue to allow improvement of public land resources, or whether changes in grazing management for the allotments are necessary. This EA is intended to evaluate the findings of the S&G evaluations as they relate to vegetation conditions and resource values in the allotments. This is done in an effort to balance demands placed on the resources by various authorized uses within the allotments. It was determined by the Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT), during the assessment process, that resource conditions on the White Spring Allotment are meeting the applicable Standards for Rangeland Health. This EA is intended to be used with the White Spring Allotment Evaluation & Rangeland Health Analysis (Appendix 1).

1.1 Background

The White Springs Allotment #46280 has not been previously evaluated through the Standards and Guideline process. On February 28, 2005, the White Springs permit was issued under the Appropriations Act with the following language: "In accordance with Sec. 325, Title III, H.R. 2691, Department of the Interior and related agencies Appropriations Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-108), which was enacted on November 10, 2003, this grazing permit is renewed under Section 402 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1752), Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. 1010 ET SEQ.), or, if applicable, Section 510 of the California Desert Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 410AAA-50). In accordance with Public Law 108-108," the terms and conditions contained in the expired or transferred permit shall continue in effect under the renewed permit until such time as the Secretary of the Interior completes processing of this permit in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, at which time this permit or lease may be cancelled, suspended, modified, in whole or part, to meet the requirements of such applicable laws and regulations."

On September 11, 2012, a proposed decision to renew the White Springs permit based on a Documentation of NEPA Adequacy was protested. As a result of that protest, additional review of the proposed management was completed and subsequent inventory of springs and waters has led to a modification of the original proposal which is presented below.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this action is to provide for livestock grazing opportunities on public lands where consistent with meeting management objectives, including the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

The need for this action is established by the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and the Safford District (SD) Resource Management Plan (RMP) (USDI BLM, 1999), which requires that the BLM respond to applications to fully process and renew permits to graze livestock on public land. In detail, the analysis of the actions identified in the applications for grazing permit renewals and the alternative actions is needed because:

- BLM Arizona adopted the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health (Land Health Standards) and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in all Land Use Plans (Arizona S&Gs) in 1997 (Appendix A). Land Health Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration were also incorporated into the SD RMP (1991, 1993). Land Health Standards for Rangelands should be achieving or making significant progress towards achieving the standards and to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Guidelines direct the selection of grazing management practices and, where appropriate, livestock facilities to promote significant progress toward, or the attainment and maintenance of, the standards. Rangeland health assessments and evaluation reports have been completed for the White Spring Allotment, and all standards were being met.

- The SD RMP identifies resource management objectives and management actions that establish guidance for managing a broad spectrum of land uses and allocations for public lands in the Safford Field Office. The SD RMP allocated public lands within the White Spring Allotment as available for domestic livestock grazing. Where consistent with the goals and objectives of the RMP and Land Health Standards, allocation of forage for livestock use and the issuance of grazing permits to qualified applicants are provided for by the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

1.3 Decision to be made

The Safford Field Manager is the authorized officer responsible for the decisions regarding management of public lands within this allotment. Based on the results of the NEPA analysis, the authorized officer will issue a determination of the significance of the environmental effects and whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) would be required. If the authorized officer determines that it is not necessary to prepare an EIS, the EA will provide information for the authorized officer to make an informed decision whether to renew, renew with modifications, or not renew the permit and if renewed, which management actions, mitigation measures, and monitoring requirements will be prescribed for the White Spring allotment to ensure management objectives and Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health are achieved.

1.4 Conformance with Land Use Plan:

The proposed action is in conformance with the Safford Resource Management Plan (RMP) (1991) and the Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Implementation of Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration 1997. Arizona's Standards and

Guides were developed through a collaborative process involving the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and the Bureau of Land Management State Standards and Guidelines team. The Secretary of the Interior approved the Standards and Guidelines in April 1997. The Decision Record, signed by the BLM Arizona State Director (April 1997) provided for full implementation of the Standards and Guides in all Arizona BLM Land Use Plans.

Implementation level decisions from the Upper Gila-San Simon Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (UG-EIS) (BLM 1978) were carried forward into the RMP. Through the above authorizing documents, BLM will continue to issue grazing permits and licenses, implement, monitor and modify allotment management plans and increase or decrease grazing authorizations as determined through the allotment evaluation processes. As necessary, National Environmental Policy Act compliance documents will be prepared prior to any action being implemented. The grazing decisions are incorporated into this Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement by reference and are common to all alternatives. Management direction pertaining to grazing for this allotment can be found in the Upper Gila-San Simon Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1978), Appendix C, p. A-27. All other discipline management objectives pertaining to this allotment can be found in the RMP.

1.4.1 RMP Decision Number and Narrative

CL19 Cultural resources stipulations will be included on all grazing leases and permits. UG-EIS page 4-2

GM12 The general objective of the proposed action is to permit livestock to use the harvestable surplus of palatable vegetation–a renewable resource–and thereby produce a usable food product. The proposed livestock management program is based on the multiple-use management concept, which provides for the demands of various resource uses and minimizes the conflicts among those uses or activities. Although the various uses of the rangeland resources can be compatible, competition among uses requires constraints and mitigating measures to realize multiple-use resource management goals. The Specific objectives for each grazing unit are shown in appendix C. UG-EIS Page 1-6

GM17 Deviation from the management system could be allowed for circumstances beyond the licensee's control, such as severe drought, but such deviations would require the District Manager's prior authorization UG-EIS Pages 1-8.

GM32 Proper stocking is an essential principle of range management, which should precede or coincide with the initiation of any grazing management system. With stocking rates in balance with the proposed grazing capacities, utilization of key forage species in the key areas would average about 40 percent over a period of years. At a given stocking rate during years of high forage production (e.g. above normal rainfall) utilization in the use pasture might be as low as 20 percent. During years of low forage production utilization could be as high as 60 percent. UG-EIS Page 1-9

VM02 Upland vegetation on public lands within the Safford District will be managed for

watershed protection, livestock use, reduction of non-point source pollution, Threatened and Endangered species protection, priority wildlife habitat, firewood and other incidental human uses. Best management practices and vegetation manipulation will be used to achieve desired plant community management objectives. Treatments may include various mechanical, chemical and prescribed fire methods. RMP page 24 & 45. UG-EIS Partial ROD I page 10.

VM03 Ecological Site Inventories will be combined with the desired plant community concept to develop management objectives for activity plans as they are written or revised. RMP page 45.

VM04 Public lands will be managed to preserve and enhance the occurrences of special status species and to achieve the eventual delisting of threatened and endangered species. RMP page 45.

VM07 Land treatments (vegetation manipulation) will be used to decrease invading woody plants and increase grasses and forbs for; wildlife and livestock forage and watershed condition. Treatment areas will be identified in activity plans. Treatments may include various artificial (mechanical, chemical, or prescribed fire) methods. RMP page 45.

WF02 District management will focus on priority species and their associated habitats to maintain or enhance population levels. Threatened and endangered, proposed, candidate, State-listed and other special status species will be managed to enhance or maintain district population levels or in accordance with established inter/intra-agency management plans. District management efforts will be directed towards the enhancement of biological diversity. UG-EIS ROD Part I page 6.

WF14 Manage habitat for optimum wildlife populations, based on ecological conditions, taking into consideration local, yearly climatic variations. BLM will follow Arizona Game and Fish Department's five-year strategic plans for the various species and will assist the Department in accomplishing its goals for the various species. RMP page 34.

1/ RMP - Safford District Resource Management Plan
2/ UG-EIS - Upper Gila - San Simon Grazing Environmental Statement

1.5 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or Other Plans or Policies:

Grazing permit renewals are provided for in 43 CFR 4100 where the objectives of the regulations are "....to promote healthy, sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions; to promote the orderly use, improvement and development of the public lands; to establish efficient and effective administration of grazing of public rangelands; and to provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands" (43 CFR 4100.0-2). The proposed action would comply with 43 CFR 4100.0-8 which states, in part, "The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield, and in accordance with applicable land use plans." The proposed action also complies with 43 CFR 4130.2(a) which states, in part, "Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on the public

lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans". The proposed action is consistent with the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health (43 CFR 4180.1) and Arizona's Standards and Guidelines, which were developed through a collaborative process involving the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and the BLM State Standards and Guidelines team. The Secretary of the Interior approved the Standards and Guidelines in April 1997. These standards and guidelines address watersheds, ecological condition, water quality, and habitat for special status species. These resources are addressed later in this document. The proposed action conforms to the President's National Energy Policy and would not have adverse energy impacts. The proposed action would not deny energy projects, withdraw lands, close roads, or in any other way deny or limit access to mineral materials to support energy actions. The regulations at 43 CFR Part 10 specifically require land use authorizations, including leases and permits, to include a requirement for the holder of the authorization to notify the appropriate Federal official immediately upon the discovery of human remains and other items covered by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (see 43 CFR 10.4(g); the actual requirement for persons to notify the Federal agency official and protect the discovery is in 43 CFR 10.4(b) and (c). Executive Order 13186 requires the BLM and other Federal agencies to work with the USFWS to provide protection for migratory birds. Implementation of the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any species of migratory bird known or suspected to occur on the allotments.

The proposed action would comply with the following laws and/or agency regulations, and are consistent with applicable Federal, state and local laws, regulations, and plans to the maximum extent possible.

- Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) of 1934
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended
- 43 CFR 4100 Grazing Administration - Exclusive of Alaska
- Arizona Water Quality Standards, Revised Statute Title 49, Chapter II
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 3001-3013; 104 Stat. 3048-3058)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969
- Executive Order 13186 – Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds

1.6 Scoping

Scope of Issues: The CEQ defines scoping as "…an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying significant issues related to a proposed action" (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping is an important underpinning of the NEPA process that encourages public input and helps focus the environmental impact analysis on relevant issues. Distribution of scoping information typically heralds the beginning of the public component of the NEPA

process. To encourage public participation, BLM mailed scoping information regarding the White Springs permit renewal proposal to interested individuals, organizations, and agencies on June 12, 2012. BLM received one letter of comment during the scoping period.

Key Issues: Several environmental issues concerning the proposed project were identified by the NEPA interdisciplinary team members and from the public comments during scoping.

1.6.1 Issues Identified

- What is the potential of the spread of invasive and non-native species?

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Design Features Common to Proposed Action and No Action Alternative

Annual Meetings: When large changes are identified in monitoring data, an annual meeting between BLM and the grazing permittee would be conducted to discuss previous years monitoring and the coming year's grazing schedule. Emergency situations would be handled on a case by case basis and would involve consultation with the above parties. The final decisions concerning the annual meeting recommendations and moves outside the scheduled use periods would be made by the authorized officer.

Flexibility: When drought is declared by the authorized officer, permittees are contacted and educated on consequences of drought on forage production. The pemittee is also reminded of the upper limit of utilization. Permittees are: 1.) encouraged to voluntarily reduce numbers 2.) if drought continues, permittees can be required to remove all cattle under a voluntary agreement or full force and effect decision

2.2 Proposed Action (No Action): Issue Grazing Permit

The proposed action would be to renew the grazing permit for White Spring for a period of ten years as authorized by the grazing regulations at §4130.2(d) with the same mandatory terms and conditions as the current permit (Table 1).

Table 1: Mandatory terms and conditions.

Allotment	Livestock number	Kind	Grazing Period Begin	Grazing Period End	Type %PL	Type Use	Active AUMS
46280	17	Cattle	03/01	02/28	92	Active	188

Other terms and conditions:

As a term and condition of this permit, you are required to do the following:

1. Submit a report of your actual use made on the allotment for the previous grazing period March 1 to February 28. Failure to submit such a report by March 15 of the year may result in suspension or cancellation of your grazing permit or lease.
2. The BLM is in the process of implementing the standards for rangeland health and

guidelines for grazing management. This permit is subject to future modification as necessary to achieve compliance with the standards and guidelines (43 CFR 4180).
3. Permittees are required to maintain all range projects for which they have maintenance responsibilities.
4. With the exceptions of salt and or mineral blocks, supplemental feeding is not authorized on public lands unless prior approval is requested and given by the authorized officer.
5. Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed within one quarter (1/4) mile of water sources, springs, streams, and riparian habitats.
6. All troughs will be outfitted with wildlife escape structures to provide a means of escape for animals that fall in while attempting to drink or bathe.
7. This permit is subject to all terms and conditions found on the back side of this permit.
8. If in connection with allotment operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

2.3 No Grazing Alternative

This alternative would remove grazing as an authorized activity on the White Spring Allotment. This alternative would cancel the permit on the White Spring Allotment. Under this alternative, BLM would initiate the process in accordance with the 43 CFR parts 4100 and 1600 to eliminate grazing on the allotment and amend the resource management plan.

2.4 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

An alternative to exclude Goodwin Wash from livestock use was considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis, because it would not have responded to the purpose and need to achieve management objectives.

No other alternatives were identified during scoping that would respond to the purpose and need and could be practically implemented on the White Springs allotment.

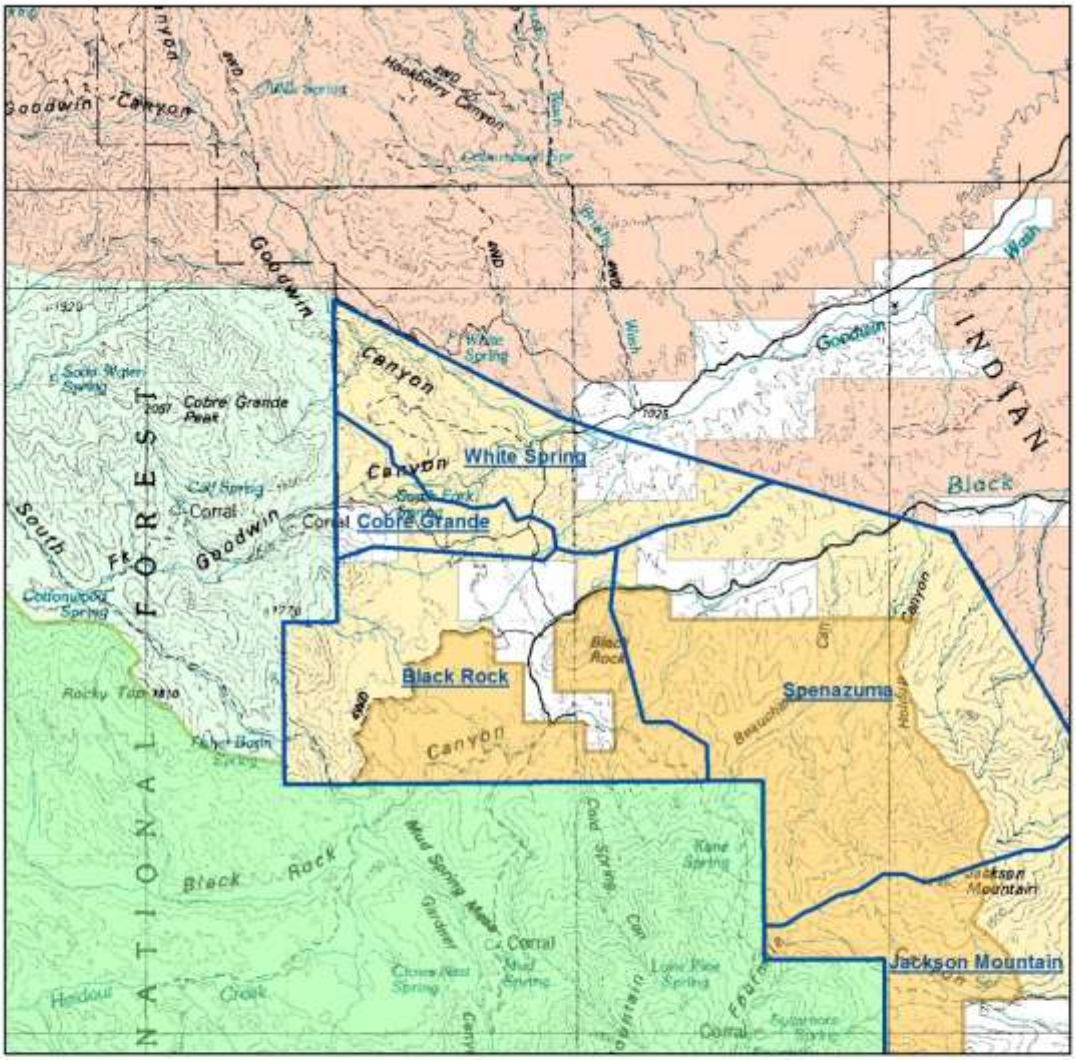
3.0 Affected Environment

The White Spring Allotment is located approximately 14 miles southwest of Fort Thomas, Arizona and just south of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. Elevation ranges from approximately 3,400 feet from the bottom of Goodwin Wash to 4,374 feet at the top of an unnamed peak. The dominant biotic community is interior chaparral.

The BLM is required to consider many authorities when evaluating a Federal action. Those elements of the human environment that are subject to the requirements specified in statutes, regulations, or executive orders, and must be considered in all EAs, have been considered by

BLM resource specialists to determine whether they would be potentially affected by the proposed action. These elements are identified in Table 2, along with the rationale for the determination on potential effects. If any element was determined to be potentially impacted, it was carried forward for detailed analysis in this EA; if an element is not present or would not be affected, it was not carried forward for analysis. Table 2 also contains other resources/concerns that have been considered in this EA. As with the elements of the human environment, if these resources were determined to be potentially affected, they were carried forward for detailed analysis in this document.

Map 1. White Spring Allotment.



SCALE 1:76,600

N W E S

0.85 0.425 0 0.85 1.7 2.55 3.4 Miles

Legend

- Private Lands
- State Lands
- State Wildlife Area
- City, State, County Parks
- County Lands
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- National Forest Lands (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- USFW Service, National Wildlife Refuges
- Indian Lands or Reservations
- BLM Wilderness Area
- Forest Service Wilderness Area
- NPS Wilderness Area
- USFW Service Wilderness Area
- BLM National Monument
- National Conservation Area
- Military Reservations/Corps of Engineers
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Arizona State Office
Land Status updated as of November 2012
Map Prepared: 9/29/2013

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of this map. This map does not address encroachments or questions of location, boundary, and area, which an accurate survey may disclose. This map is intended and is to be used as an illustration only. The map is merely representational, is not the data from which it was derived are not binding on the BLM and may be revised at any time in the future. The BLM shall not be liable under any circumstances for any direct, indirect, special, incidental, or consequential damages with respect to any claim by any user or any third party on account of or arising from the use of this map or the data from which it was derived.

Table 2. Summary evaluation of elements/resources of the human environment.

Resource	Determination*	Affected Environment (Rationale for Determination)
* NP = Not present in the area that will be impacted by the proposed action. NI = Present, but not affected to a degree that would mean detailed analysis is required. PI = Present with potential for impact; analyzed in detail in the EA.		
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	NP	The nearest ACEC's to the White Spring Allotment are: Bear Springs Badlands ACEC, 13 miles to the east, southeast; Desert Grasslands RNA ACEC, seven miles to the south; Turkey Creek ACEC, eight miles to the south. Because there are no ACEC's within the project area, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on this critical element would occur.
Air Quality	NI	Air quality is affected by vegetation cover which is affected by grazing and related activities. The nearest Class I airshed is associated with the Galiuro Wilderness in Coronado National Forest, approximately 20 miles south of the project area. Local sources of air pollutants (PM10) include traffic on unpaved roads, fire (both wild and prescribed), and natural events such as windstorms. Highly localized and minor effects resulting from fugitive dust, equipment operation, and engine emissions are anticipated during operations associated with livestock management. No long-term adverse effects are expected from this action.
Cultural Resources	NP	A Class I and III cultural inventory of the project area was completed. No cultural resources were identified within the project area. Allotment case files, AMP files, range project files, Water Source Inventory files, and Cultural Resource files were reviewed.
Environmental Justice	NP	The project area encompasses uninhabited public lands administered by BLM. The closest communities are Fort Thomas and Bylas, Arizona with a few small town sites like Emory and Geronimo in between, all of which are 10 to 15 miles northeast of the allotment. No aspect of the Proposed Action, or the Alternative Action will have a disproportionately high adverse health or other environmental impact on low income or minority populations as defined by Executive Order 12898.
Farmlands (Prime or Unique)	NP	There are no prime or unique farmlands within or near the project area, therefore there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to this critical element.
Floodplains	NI	Part of Goodwin Wash is within a FEMA designated floodplain. The proposed action would not alter the floodplain in the project area to limit water infiltration or water energy produced during flood flow events. Vegetation along streambanks and in the floodplain would provide stability appropriate to the system, given the topography, climate, hydrology, and soil characteristics inherent in the system.
Invasive and Nonnative Species	PI	Areas of ground disturbance, from livestock or other activities, increase the likelihood of establishment of invasive species. Livestock, associated activities, and recreation have the potential to introduce invasive species. This issue is therefore analyzed in detail.
National Energy Policy	NI	The proposed and alternative actions will not impact the National Energy Policy Act of 2005, in that implementation does not impinge on any future and potential energy projects. Therefore there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to this critical element.
Native American Religious Concerns	NP	During consultations with American Indian Tribes who claim cultural affiliation to southern Arizona, no Native American religious concerns have been identified in relation to actions proposed in this EA.
Socioeconomic Values	NI	The closest communities are Fort Thomas and Bylas, Arizona with a few small town sites like Emory and Geronimo in between, all of which are 10 to 15 miles northeast of the allotment. The social and economic base for these communities is farming and ranching. The White Spring Allotment and the associated 17 head of cattle contribute in a very minor way to the socioeconomics of the local communities. The impact contrast of the Alternative Action (removal of 17 head of cattle from local economic production) with the Proposed Action (17 head of cattle remain part of the local economic production) is so small that it is not discernible.
Soils	NI	Soils do not show signs of erosion or altered flow pattern. The rocky characteristic of the area reduces vulnerability to compaction and erosion.
Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Plant Species	NP	No threatened, endangered, or candidate plant species are known to occur on the allotment.

Resource	Determination*	Affected Environment (Rationale for Determination)
Threatened, Endangered Animal Species	NI	The Safford Field Office implements its grazing program consistent with the Biological Opinion (BO) rendered on the Gila District Livestock Grazing Program for the Safford/Tucson Field Offices' Livestock Grazing Program, Southeastern Arizona (22410-2006-F-0414). This BO was reviewed to insure that all mitigation measures and stated in the BO are being followed. Ocelot is the only threatened or endangered species with the potential to occur on the White Spring Allotment, it was determined in the BO that grazing was not likely to adversely affect ocelot.
Visual Resource Management	NI	The White Spring allotment is located within a VRM class four, which allows management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. Every attempt should be made, however, to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance and repeating the basic elements. Neither action would alter the visual characteristic of the allotment. Therefore there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to this critical element.
Wastes (hazardous or solid)	NP	There are no hazardous or solid wastes within the project area and no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on this critical element would occur.
Water Quality (Surface, Ground, Drinking)	NI	There are three wells on the White Spring allotment which potentially provide water for livestock. There are no known water quality issues nor any 303(d) listed impaired waters. White Spring (outside the allotment boundary) is approximately 0.6 miles from the nearest well and is hydrololically disconnected. South Fork Spring is 1.12 miles upstream from the nearest well and is hydrologically disconnected. Therefore there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to this critical element.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	NP	Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, directs federal agencies to take action to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out the agency's responsibilities. There are no wetland or riparian zones within the White Spring allotment, therefore there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to this critical element.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	NP	There are no wild and scenic rivers within the project area and no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on this critical element would occur.
Wilderness	NP	The Santa Teresa Wilderness was designated under the 1984 Arizona Wilderness Act and is approximately 0.3 miles south of the White Spring Allotment. Because there are no designated wilderness areas within the action area of the project, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on this critical element would occur from the proposed action or no action alternative.
Wilderness Characteristics	NP	The area analyzed within the White Spring allotment does not meet the size criteria for wilderness characteristics. Due to not meeting the size criteria, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would occur to wilderness characteristics from the proposed action.

Resource	Determination*	Affected Environment (Rationale for Determination)
Wildlife and Special Status Species	NI	Priority species occurring on the White Spring allotment include mule deer, white tail deer, black bear, javelina, and quail. Grazing-and priority wildlife species conflicts is within levels identified as acceptable through the Resource Management Plan. Golden eagle and peregrine falcon may nest on cliffs near the allotment. The Safford Field Office is aware of the occurrence of peregrine falcons on the nearby Black Rock Allotment and cooperates with ongoing monitoring of this delisted species. No activities are proposed which would cause levels of disturbance which may lead to take. The giant spotted whiptail (*Aspidoscelis burti stictogrammus*) inhabits mountain canyons, arroyos, and mesas in arid and semi-arid regions, entering lowland desert along stream courses at elevations up to 4,500 ft. and are associated with riparian habitat dominated by sycamore, cottonwood, ash, and various grasses and forbs and open areas of bunch grass within these habitats. There is limited, if any, potential habitat for giant spotted whiptails on the White Spring allotment as there's no riparian habitat within the allotment. Critical Habitat for Mexican spotted owl is located on US Forest Service lands within the Santa Teresa Mountains which are on the western edge of the White Spring Allotment. There is no designated Critical Habitat on the White Spring Allotment. US Forest Service surveys for Mexican spotted owls in the Santa Teresa Mountains have not documented their presence (A. Casey, Personal Communication, July 9, 2012). Activities on the White Spring allotment will not affect Mexican spotted owl critical habitat. **T**he ocelot uses a wide range of habitats throughout its range and has the potential to occur on the White Spring allotment. The Safford Field Office implements its grazing program consistent with the Biological Opinion (BO) rendered on the Gila District Livestock Grazing Program for the Safford/Tucson Field Offices' Livestock Grazing Program, Southeastern Arizona (22410-2006-F-0414). This BO was reviewed to insure that all mitigation measures and stated in the BO are being followed. It was determined that grazing was not likely to adversely affect ocelot.

3.1 Resources Brought Forward for Analysis

3.1.2 Invasive and Nonnative Species

Two Federal laws direct invasive and nonnative species control on Federal lands. The Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (7 U.S.C. 2801-2813), as amended by Section 15, Management of Undesirable Plants on Federal Lands, 1990, and the Carlson-Foley Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-583). In addition, under Executive Order 13112, dated February 3, 1999, states: "projects which occur on Federal land or receive Federal funding must use relevant programs and authorities to: (1) prevent the introduction of invasive plant species, (2) detect and respond rapidly to and control populations of such species in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner, (3) monitor invasive plant species populations accurately and reliably, and (4) provide for restoration of native plant species and habitat conditions in ecosystems that have been invaded." Noxious weeds are species of invasive plants identified by governmental agencies as exerting substantial negative environmental or economic impact. The term "noxious weed" is a legal classification, not an ecological term. Infestations of noxious weeds are most likely to occur in disturbed areas such as construction sites, road shoulders, livestock concentration areas, and fallow agricultural fields.

The project area is located in the Southeastern Arizona Cooperative Weed Management Area.

While not designated as noxious, two invasive species have been documented on the White Spring Allotment. Salt cedar (*Tamarix spp.*) is found intermittently within Goodwin Wash in the

White Spring allotment. Red brome (*Bromus rubens*) is present on the allotment and is widespread throughout Arizona. Red brome is poor forage due to low palatability and a short growing season. Red brome, once established has the potential to change an area's fire regime by increasing fuel loads, which increases spread and intensity of fires.

4.0 Environmental Consequences

4.1 Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

4.1.1 Invasive and Nonnative Species

While there are not currently any known noxious weeds on the White Spring Allotment, humans, livestock, vehicles, and hay entering the allotment have the potential to introduce and spread noxious weeds. To a lesser extent wildlife may introduce and spread noxious weeds.

4.2 Environmental Consequences of No Grazing Alternative

4.2.1 Invasive and Nonnative Species

The potential for introduction and spread of nonnative, invasive species would be reduced.

4.3 Cumulative Impacts

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations that implement NEPA defines a cumulative impact as: "The impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions." Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).

Life of the proposed action and its alternatives is ten years; this time frame is considered to be most appropriate for considering the incremental effect of actions in the foreseeable future. Many of the past and present actions are expected to persist through this time frame, though the relative intensity of these actions could vary.

The following critical elements, ACEC's, Floodplains, Wastes, Invasive and Nonnative Species, Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns, Prime Farmland, VRM, Water Quality, Visual Resources, Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Characteristics, Wilderness and T&E Fish/Fisheries would have no cumulative impacts from the proposed action or alternatives as they are affected by the proposed action or are not found within or adjacent to the White Spring allotment. would not be altered by the proposed action or alternatives and therefore would not add to cumulative impacts.

Hunting, hiking, birding, and other outdoor activities will likely increase as urban areas become increasingly crowded and rural communities grow. Roads within the watershed will continue to contribute to erosion in the area.

The nearby Black Rock and Spenazuma allotments have proposed grazing rotation systems which may alter the season of use of pastures on those allotments. There are no known proposed actions in the action area.

4.4 Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Activities

In 1936 the first attempts were made to process application and claims for livestock use on public lands. First consideration was given to livestock operators who could show control or prior use of water necessary to support livestock grazing on public lands. In most areas, the application for livestock grazing exceeded the land's actual carrying capacity.

In 1935 and 1936 the Soil Conservation Service conducted a range survey of the public lands and presented its finding to the Safford District Advisory Board in 1937. The Advisory Board recommended carrying capacities to be set somewhat higher than range survey indicated. Vast majorities of the allotments were over stocked until the implementation of the Upper Gila-San Simon Grazing Environmental Statement. There are no additional range projects proposed in the foreseeable future.

There are no developed recreation facilities in the allotment; however, dispersed recreation does occur. Dispersed recreation primarily involves game hunting, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) operation. Overall, there is very little sign of recreation use or subsequent impacts. There are no recreation related concerns that would contribute to cumulative impacts. Currently public access to the allotment is limited by having to travel through the San Carlos Apache Reservation.

Past and present actions within the Goodwin Wash floodplain include a two track dirt road used for both recreational and administrative access and grazing. Roads often have a negative impact due to soil compaction and entrainment of runoff waters. Foreseeable future actions in the area include increased recreational activities such as hunting, camping, hiking, and birding.

The area will likely continue to have light seasonal recreational use during spring and fall. A variety of outdoor enthusiasts use the area for hiking, hunting, picnicking, birding, horseback riding, primitive camping, and off-highway vehicle driving.

The adjacent Spenazuma and Black Rock allotments have proposed grazing rotation systems to maintain or improve conditions those allotments. There are no known actions proposed in the action area.

4.5 Cumulative Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternative

4.6 Proposed Action

Invasive, nonnative species threaten the integrity of biotic communities globally and across the western states. The potential to introduce and spread invasive species would increase as they increase within the region. Without periodic inventory and prompt treatment of infestations, increases in the proliferation of invasive, nonnative species would occur.

4.7 No Grazing Alternative

With the no grazing alternative, plant diversity, plant cover, and production would potentially increase over time. This would reduce erosion and runoff, increase water infiltration improve habitat and watershed function throughout the allotment. For species in competition with livestock, implementation of the no grazing alternative would reduce this competition. The potential for introduction and spread of invasive species would be reduced.

5.0 Consultation and Coordination

5.1 Persons/Agencies Consulted

Safford Field Office:
Archaeologist, Dan McGrew
Natural Resource Specialist, Jeff Conn
Recreation Planner, Deb Morris
Geologist, Larry Thrasher
Realty Specialist, Roberta Lopez
Hydrologist, Bill Wells
Rangeland Management Specialist, Gwen Dominguez
Assistant Field Manager and NEPA Specialist, Joe David

6.0 Appendix 1: Arizona Standards and Guides Evaluation

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Arizona Standards and Guidelines Evaluation
White Spring, number 4628

1.0 Introduction

The Allotment Assessment for White Spring was conducted in accordance with the direction set forth in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Washington Office Instruction Memorandum No. 98-91 and Arizona No. 99-012 for implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. The purpose of the standards and guidelines is to improve the health of the public rangelands. The standards and guidelines are intended to help the BLM, rangeland users, and others focus on a common understanding of acceptable resource conditions and work together to achieve that vision. The Decision Record for implementation of Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration Environmental Assessment were approved by the Arizona State Director in April 1997. This decision became effective upon approval of the Arizona standards and guidelines by the Secretary of Interior in April 1997. The Decision Record allowed for full implementation of Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration in all Arizona BLM Land Use Plans.

Definition of Standards and Guidelines

Standards of rangeland health are expressions of levels of physical and biological condition or degree of function required for healthy, sustainable rangelands and defines minimum resource conditions that must be achieved and maintained. Determination of rangeland health is based upon conformance with the standards. Application of the standard to the range site considers the potential of the site without regard for the types or levels of use or management actions or decisions.

Guidelines, in contrast, do consider type and level of grazing use. Guidelines for grazing management are types of methods and practices determined to be appropriate to ensure the standards can be met or that significant progress can be made toward meeting the standard. Guidelines are tools that help managers and permittees achieve standards. Guidelines are specific to livestock grazing. Guidelines are best management practices such as grazing systems, which could be used to achieve rangeland health standards.

Although the process of developing standards and guidelines applies to grazing administration, present rangeland health is the result of the interaction of many factors in addition to grazing livestock. Other contributing factors may include, but are not limited to, past land uses, land use restrictions, recreation, wildlife, rights-of-way, wild horses and burros, mining, fire, weather, and insects and disease (Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, 1997).

With the commitment of BLM to ecosystem and interdisciplinary resource management, the standards for rangeland health as developed in this current process will be incorporated into management goals and objectives. The standards and guidelines for rangeland health for grazing

administration, however, are not the only considerations in resolving resource issues (Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, 1997).

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine if existing multiple uses are meeting the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for grazing administration along with appropriate land use plan and activity plan objectives. Standards are goals for the desired condition of the biological and physical components and characteristics of rangelands, whereas, guidelines are management approaches, methods, and practices.

2.0 General Description of Evaluation Area

The White Spring Allotment is located approximately 14 miles southwest of Fort Thomas, Arizona and just south of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation (Map 1). Elevation ranges from approximately 3,400 feet from the bottom of Goodwin Wash to 4,374 feet at the top of an unnamed peak. Please refer to Figures 1-4 that show the allotment from the four cardinal points (*i.e.*, north, south, east, and west).

2.1 Land Use Plan Objectives and Decisions

The Safford District Monitoring Plan does not identify this allotment to have an allotment management plan. There has not been a previous evaluation conducted.

There are no specific objectives listed for the White Spring allotment in the Upper Gila/San Simon Grazing Environmental Impact Statement and the Safford District Resource Management Plan.

3.0 Grazing Use

3.1 Grazing History

The first paperwork on file within the BLM for the White Spring allotment is from 1966 and indicated that the total allotment acreage was 6,105 acres with 158 Cattle Year-Long (CYL).

On June 30, 1970, 4,720 acres of the White Spring Allotment was restored to ownership of the San Carlos Apache Indian Tribe and made part of the reservation. This meant that the allotment was 1,385 acres.

An Allotment Summary of Grazing Capacity, prepared on April 23, 1970, indicated that the allotment was comprised of 1,520 acres of Federal range and 245 acres of private range for a total of 1,765 acres and 276 animal unit months (AUM) or 23 CYL.

The 1978 Upper Gila – San Simon Grazing EIS indicated that the 1972-1976 average licensed use AUMs had been 290 but that the carrying capacity was 156 AUM's.

The proposed decision on December 30, 1980, to be effective March 1, 1982, was to reduce the numbers from 25 cattle (274 AUM's) to 13 cattle (142 AUM's*). *Rounded to facilitate a whole number for a yearlong operation.

On January 9, 1981, the permittee filed a written protest requesting that the original number of 274 AUM's be restored.

On July 27, 1981, the District Manager issued a final decision stating that the reduction in numbers (to 142 AUM's) was warranted and would be implemented over a five-year period and that subsequent utilization monitoring would be gathered to evaluate whether numbers would be adjusted up, down, or remain the same in the future.

On November 22, 1985, a proposed decision was sent out indicating that the adjustments to livestock numbers to that point in time was all that was necessary to bring grazing use in line with forage production. This set the livestock numbers at 17 cattle for a total of 188 AUM's.

Since 1988 the White Spring has been primarily in non-use due to a combination of drought, business fluctuations, problems with access through the reservation, and conservation use.

3.2 Current Management

The management category given to the White Spring allotment is custodial (C). Custodial grazing management is applied to areas having acceptable range condition and a stable or improving trend. Under custodial management BLM management actions are limited to licensing livestock use based on the AUMs available on the public lands, which have been established at 188 AUMs for the White Spring allotment. The ranch operator is responsible for determining livestock numbers (up to the allowable AUM) and the grazing system (if any) to be used and reporting actual use on the allotment. Bureau of Land Management checks these grazing units to ensure that the utilization on public lands is not excessive, that range condition and trend are being maintained, and that applicable regulations are being followed. If utilization is found to be excessive or the range trend to be down, BLM will work with the operator to adjust livestock numbers on the total grazing unit. Custodial grazing units include areas where the effects of livestock use on the public land resources are anticipated to be minimal. Selection of public land areas for custodial management is based on the following criteria:

1) Small isolated or intermingled tracts of public lands generally smaller than 640 acres with no significant multiple-use values or potential.
2) Public land areas where management is significantly compromised by other land ownership.
3) Conflicts with other resources not identified in inventory and planning process.
4) Good to excellent range condition and stable or improving range trend.
5) Satisfactory range management practices.

3.3 Actual Use

Actual use data for livestock was determined through the Actual Use Reports, Form 4130-5. Refer to Table 1 for actual use from the previous 47-years. The permittee has taken non-use

during the past 20 years due to a combination of drought and lack of reliable water sources on the allotment.

Table 1. Actual Use on the White Spring Allotment.

Year									2012	2011	2010
AUMs									0	0	0
Year	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
AUMs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
AUMs	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	77	0	0	0
Year	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977
AUMs	188	188	188	188	276	232	274	274	274	274	274
Year	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969*	1968*	1967*	1966*
AUMs	274	182	274	252	252	252	252	1,614	1,614	1,614	1,593

*Prior to reduction in Allotment size.

3.4 Terms and Conditions of the Current Permit

Allotment Number	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMS
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
46280	17	Cattle	03/01	02/28	92	Active	188

Other terms and conditions:

You are required to submit a report of the actual grazing use made on this allotment for the previous grazing period, March 1 to February 28. Failure to submit such a report by March 15 of this year may result in suspension or cancellation of your grazing permit.

Percent Public Land: 92%
Grazing Preference: 188 Animal Unit Month (AUM)
Rangeland Classification: Perennial__X__ Ephemeral___

4.0 Evaluation Area Profile

4.1 Land Status

PUBLIC 1,520
STATE 0
PRIVATE 245
TOTAL 1,765 acres

4.2 Soils and Ecological Sites

The Natural Resource Conservation Service characterizes land resource regions by particular patterns of soils, climate, water resources and land uses. These large regions are then grouped into Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA's). The White Spring allotment falls within a transition area between MLRA's 38-1 and 41-3. Ecological sites on the allotment consist of granitic hills (38-1), clayey slopes (38-1), volcanic hills (38-1) and loamy slopes (41-3), all within the 12-16" precipitation level. For a complete description of the soils on the White Spring allotment, refer to Gila-Duncan Area, Parts of Graham and Greenlee Counties, Arizona soil survey (NRCS 1981).

4.3 Climate

Precipitation

The White Spring allotment has received less than the 30 year average of precipitation since 1989. The nearest and most consistently collected precipitation data is from the neighboring Black Rock Allotment, Table 2.

Table 2. Black Rock Rain Gauge Data

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Decadal Average	Decadal Median
1980											0.26	0.90			
1981	1.03	2.47	2.62	0.95	1.23	0.48	2.76	1.60	2.49	0.38	2.17	0.04	18.22		
1982	5.99	2.55	3.02	0.37	1.34	0.04	1.86	1.40	1.90	0.00	2.18	4.13	24.78		
1983	5.52	2.48	6.25	0.75	0.00	0.00	2.80	1.67	4.36	6.05	3.37	3.77	37.02		
1984	0.85	0.09	0.11	1.35	0.26	0.48	4.61	3.99	3.03	2.43	1.79	4.96	23.95		
1985	1.39	2.53	1.79	1.56	0.00	0.06	1.63	1.36	1.49	1.93	2.74	0.41	16.89		
1986	0.04	3.45	5.53	0.03	0.30	0.11	4.06	3.48	1.91	2.48	2.20	2.68	26.27	21.74	21.09
1987	1.67	3.21	2.02	74*	63*	0.79	1.07	1.39	1.57	0.76	0.60	2.73	15.81		
1988	1.86	1.84	0.00	2.78	0.13	0.41	2.50	2.99	0.78	0.86	2.03	0.41	16.59		
1989	1.84	0.06	0.83	0.03	0.42	0.00	1.85	5.08	0.02	1.68	0.00	0.67	12.48		
1990	1.29	2.78	2.57	0.81	0.07	0.31	5.24	2.94	1.88	0.72	2.60	4.19	25.40		
1991	1.50	1.95	7.32	0.00	0.00	0.10	1.61	3.53	0.14	0.83	1.53	3.78	22.29		
1992	3.16	3.89	3.70	0.34	3.57	..69	1.03	4.57	1.25	0.47	0.30	6.22	28.50		
1993	9.59	5.10	1.94	0.00	1.64	0.00	1.77	3.37	0.79	2.04	2.62	1.54	30.40		
1994	0.21	3.46	3.24	0.54	1.06	0.17	1.65	3.68	1.87	1.37	3.33	3.60	24.18		
1995	5.51	3.04	2.41	1.31	1.04	0.00	0.58	5.09	1.36	0.00	1.20	0.75	22.29		
1996	0.07	5.08	0.38	0.12	0.03	0.75	2.54	4.52	3.64	1.70	0.95	0.02	19.80	23.44	22.29
1997	3.60	3.31	0.64	*	0.47	0.86	1.33	1.96	1.61	1.92	2.03	4.38	22.11		
1998	1.29	6.94	3.04	0.87	0.00	0.46	4.62	4.57	0.32	1.38	2.39	0.92	26.80		
1999	0.16	0.08	0.62	1.78	0.00	0.10	6.58	3.10	2.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.57		
2000	0.76	1.02	1.18	0.00	0.00	1.50							4.46*		
2001							2.50	3.40	0.00	0.90	0.30	0.65	7.75*		
2002	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.90	1.67	1.35	1.35	0.22	0.30	7.19		
2003	0.37	3.45	1.20	0.00	0.00	0.25	3.67	1.45	2.55	0.30	1.50	1.55	16.29		
2004	2.75	1.20	2.45	1.91	0.00	0.00	1.60	1.00	1.50	0.40	0.00	0.00	12.81		
2005														14.11	16.29
2006															
2007	1.75	3.50	1.75	0.30	0.00	0.00	2.25	3.95	0.30	0.00	0.30	5.45	19.55		
2008	1.00	4.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.60	1.80	18.65		
2009	0.40	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.80	0.40	2.20	0.00	0.00	1.60	6.05		
2010	7.80	3.35	0.65	0.25	0.00	0.00	3.15	0.40	0.80	0.20	0.00	1.60	18.20		
2011	0.00	0.00	0.55	0.20	0.00	0.00	2.55	3.80	1.50	0.40	0.50	2.80	12.30		
*data omitted from average									Average Annual Precip.				19.98		

There is no Section 303d Water Quality Limited Stream Segment associated with this allotment. Based on current information, there are no other concerns about water or water quality that should be considered before permit issuance. In addition, there is no perennial stream or water on the allotment.

4.4 Wildlife and Special Status Species

Wildlife species that may be present on this allotment include, but are not limited to, mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), Gambel's quail (*Callipepla gambleii*), mourning doves (*Zenaida macroura*), kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys* spp.), black-tailed jackrabbits (*Lepus californicus*) and various lizard species. Raptor species such as red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) also forage in the area.

A query of the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Data Management System produced a list of special status species and critical habitat found within five miles of the White Spring Allotment, Table 1.

Table 1. Special Status Species Occurrences/Critical Habitat within five miles of White Spring Allotment.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FWS	BLM	STATE
Aquila chrysaetos	Golden Eagle		S	
Aspidoscelis burti stictogrammus	Giant Spotted Whiptail	SC		
CH for Strix occidentalis lucida	Designated Critical Habitat for Mexican spotted owl			
Falco peregrinus	American Peregrine Falcon	SC	S	WSC

FWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
BLM = Bureau of Land Management
C = Candidate
T = Threatened
SC = Species of Concern
E = Endangered
S = Sensitive
SR = State Restricted
WSC = Wildlife Species of Concern

The Safford Field Office implements its grazing program consistent with the Biological Opinion (BO) rendered on the Gila District Livestock Grazing Program for the Safford/Tucson Field Offices' Livestock Grazing Program, Southeastern Arizona (22410-2006-F-0414). This BO was reviewed to insure that all mitigation measures and terms and conditions stated in the BO are being followed.

The golden eagle is susceptible to disturbance during the nesting period (February through April). The Golden Eagle's territory size in several areas of the western U.S. averaged 22-55 square miles (57-142 sq. km). They nest on rock ledges, cliffs or in large trees and may have several alternate nests and they may use the same nests in consecutive years or shift to alternate nest used in different years. There are no known nesting areas within the White Spring Allotment; however, suitable habitat may exist in the nearby Santa Teresa Mountains. Grazing and livestock grazing actions on the White Spring Allotment would not affect Golden eagle.

The giant spotted whiptail (*Aspidoscelis burti stictogrammus*) inhabits mountain canyons, arroyos, and mesas in arid and semi-arid regions, entering lowland desert along stream courses at elevations up to 4,500 ft. They can be found in dense shrubby vegetation, often among rocks near permanent and intermittent streams (Stebbins 1985) and are associated with riparian habitat dominated by sycamore, cottonwood, ash, and various grasses and forbs and open areas of bunch grass within these habitats (Degenhardt *et al*., 1996). There is limited, if any, potential habitat for giant spotted whiptails on the White Spring allotment as there's no riparian habitat within the allotment, therefore there are no anticipated effects.

Critical Habitat for Mexican spotted owl is located on US Forest Service lands within the Santa Teresa Mountains which are on the western edge of the White Spring Allotment. There is no designated Critical Habitat on the White Spring Allotment. US Forest Service surveys for Mexican spotted owls in the Santa Teresa Mountains have not documented their presence (A. Casey, Personal Communication, July 9, 2012). Activities on the White Spring allotment will not affect Mexican spotted owl designated critical habitat.

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) has the most extensive natural distribution of any bird in the world. It is limited only by high elevations, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Absent only from high mountains, large tracts of desert and jungle and isolated islands in the ocean. In Arizona, the American peregrine falcon is found wherever sufficient prey is found near cliffs. Optimum habitat is generally considered to be steep, sheer cliffs overlooking woodlands, riparian areas, or other habitats supporting avian prey species in abundance. The presence of an open expanse is critical; however, as their population grows, they seem to be breeding in less optimal habitats, either small broken cliffs in ponderosa pine forests or large, sheer cliffs in very xeric areas.

Peregrine Falcons build their nests from soft sticks and soft natural fiber materials in which they can incubate their eggs. They lay their eggs in "scrapes" or shallow indentations they scratch out with their talons in the floor of their nests. They build their nests on ledges and in small shallow caves on high cliff walls. They also take over abandoned nests from other birds. They feed primarily on other birds including songbirds, shorebirds, ducks, and in urban areas, starlings and pigeons. Peregrines will fly high above their prey and "stoop" or dive and strike in mid-air, killing the prey with a sharp blow (AGFD, 2002).

Peregrine falcons are not known to nest within the White Spring allotment due to no known nesting habitat. Suitable nesting habitat is located nearby in the Santa Teresa Mountains. Migrating or foraging peregrine falcon may pass through the White Spring allotment, but grazing and livestock grazing management actions would not affect them.

Endangered status was extended to the U.S. portion of the ocelot's range with a final rule published July 21, 1982 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1982a). Critical habitat is not designated for the ocelot. Recovery for the ocelot was originally addressed in Listed Cats of Texas and Arizona Recovery Plan (with Emphasis on the Ocelot) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1990). A revised draft recovery plan was made available for public comment on August 26, 2010. The

ocelot uses a wide range of habitats throughout its range in the Western Hemisphere (Tewes and Schmidly 1987). Despite this, the species does not appear to be a habitat generalist. Ocelot spatial patterns are strongly linked to dense cover or vegetation, suggesting it uses a fairly narrow range of microhabitats (Emmons 1988, Horne 1998). Many of the threats to the ocelot are common to all Latin American countries where most studies have occurred on nationally-recognized preserves. Threats generally include habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, logging, and harvest of the ocelot and its prey. Ocelot hunting varies between and within countries, and is legal in Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, and Peru. Ocelot populations appear to be rebounding in parts of its range, perhaps due to a decrease of hunting since the end of the 1980s. In the absence of hunting the ocelot seems tolerant of human settlement and activities if large forests and sufficient prey are available. The Arizona/Sonora ocelot subspecies (L. p. sonoriensis) occurs in southern Arizona and northwestern Mexico (Sonora and northern Sinaloa) (López-Gonzalez et al. 2003; Murray and Gardner 1997). Breeding populations occur in the States of Sonora and northern Sinaloa.

In November 2009, the first live ocelot was documented in Arizona (in Cochise County) with the use of camera traps. Additionally, in April 2010, an ocelot was found dead on a road near Globe, Arizona, and a genetic analysis is underway to determine the origin of this specimen, although preliminary data indicate the young male ocelot was not of captive origin. Additional sightings have been documented in southeastern Arizona in 2011 and 2012. Prior to these findings, the last known ocelot in Arizona was lawfully shot on Pat Scott Peak in the Huachuca Mountains in 1964 (Hoffmeister 1986, Lopez Gonzalez et al. 2003). In addition to the recent Arizona sightings, a number of ocelots have been documented just south of the U.S. border in Sonora, Mexico. Specifically, with the use of camera traps, at least 4 ocelots have been documented since February 2007 in the Sierra Azul, 30-35 miles southeast of Nogales; and 1 ocelot was documented in 2009 in the Sierra de Los Ajos, about 30 miles south of the U.S. border near Naco, Mexico. Lopez Gonzalez et al. (2003) obtained 36 verified ocelot records for Sonora, 21 of which were obtained after 1990. Twenty-seven (75%) of the records for which they could determine the biotic community association were associated with tropical and subtropical habitats, namely subtropical thornscrub, tropical deciduous forest or tropical thornscrub. A population of 2,025 + 675 ocelots in Sonora was estimated by Lopez Gonzalez et al. (2003) based on the distribution of these records and the availability of potential habitat. Human population growth and development continue throughout the ocelot's range. Connectivity among ocelot populations or colonization of new habitats is discouraged by the proliferation of highways and increased road mortality among dispersing ocelots. Increased illegal and law enforcement actions along the U.S./Mexico international border could limit ocelot movement across the border, but it is uncertain if and how much this is affecting that movement.

Connoly (2009) recommends that habitats with more dense vegetation than surrounding areas, be considered as ocelot travel corridors between habitats. The draft Ocelot Recovery Plan (USFWS, 2010) identifies such corridors as providing 'critical landscape connectivity'.

4.6 Special Management Areas

There are no special areas or designations, including Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness, Unique

Waters, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern within the allotment. Wilderness inventory was conducted between 1978 and 1980 and no lands within the White Spring allotment were found to contain wilderness character.

4.7 Recreation Resources

To access public lands on this allotment you must travel through the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. There are no developed recreation sites on the allotment. Recreation use appears minimal with hunting as the primary activity.

4.8 Visual Resources

The Safford Resource Management Plan identifies public lands within the White Spring area as VRM Class III. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of activities may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class III Visual Resource Management objectives are being met on the White Spring allotment.

4.9 Cultural Resources

Issuance of the permit constitutes a Federal Undertaking under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Area of Potential Effect (APE) has been determined to be the public lands within the grazing allotment.

In compliance with the BLM Cultural Resources Programmatic Agreement, the Arizona BLM-State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Protocol, the 1980 Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement between the BLM, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, and the BLM 8100 Manual series, the following actions have been taken to identify cultural resources located in the APE, evaluation of the eligibility of cultural resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), determination of the effect of the undertaking on eligible cultural resources, and the design of mitigation measures or alternatives where appropriate.

The State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and Indian tribes having historical ties to Arizona public lands were consulted during the preparation of the Upper Gila/San Simon Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (9/78) and the Safford Resource Management Plan (8/91). Native American Indian tribes were consulted at the beginning of the permit renewal process and there were no areas of Native American concern, Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP), or Sacred Sites identified during consultations.

Allotment case files, allotment management plans (AMP) files, range project files, water source inventory files, and cultural resource files were reviewed to determine areas of livestock

congregation and whether these areas have been previously inventoried for cultural resources. The records indicate that there are no areas of livestock congregation that required an intensive field inventory.

As required by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act regulations at 43 CFR 10.4(g), the following should be added to the grazing lease/permit as a term and condition:

> If in connection with allotment operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

* Properties refer to archaeological sites, Traditional Cultural Properties, and Sacred Sites.

4.10 Noxious Weeds/Invasive Species

There are no known or documented occurrences of state listed noxious weeds on the White Spring allotment. Salt cedar (*Tamarix spp.*) is common in riparian or wetted areas throughout Arizona and is found intermittently within Goodwin Wash in this allotment. Red brome (*Bromus rubens*) is present on the allotment and is widespread throughout Arizona. Red brome is poor forage due to low palatability and a short growing season. Red brome, once established has the potential to change an area's fire regime by increasing fuel loads, which increases spread and intensity of fires.

4.11 Allotment Objectives

4.11.1 Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration

> Standard 1: Upland Sites
> Upland soils exhibit infiltration, permeability, and erosion rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate and landform.
>
> Standard 2: Riparian- Wetland Sites
> Maintain or improve riparian/wetland areas to facilitate proper functioning condition.
>
> Standard 3: Desired Resource Condition
> Maintain or improve productive and diverse upland and riparian-wetland plant communities of native species.

5.0 Management Evaluation

5.1 Upland Health Assessment

An upland health assessment was completed at a site centrally located and representative of the White Spring allotment. This method of assessment requires observation and rating of set physical and biological attributes at a site to determine upland health. These observed attributes are placed in one of five categories depending on their degree of presence or absence on the site (*i.e.*, None to Slight, Slight to Moderate, Moderate, Moderate to Extreme, and Extreme). These attributes include items such as: plant pedestaling, flow patterns, soil and litter movement by wind or water, and presence of rills or active gullies. A final upland health determination is made by summing all of the attributes. Refer to Table 4 for a summary of the assessments on the White Spring allotment. Methods for the upland health assessments are described in "Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Technical Reference 1734-6, 2000."

Table 4. Summary of the White Spring Allotment Upland Health Assessment.

Rangeland Health Attribute	Departure From Ecological Site Description				
	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Soil/Site Stability				2	8
Hydrologic Function				2	8
Biotic Integrity			1	2	6

The one moderate rating in the Biotic Integrity attribute was due to the low estimated annual production due to a combination of drought and shrub encroachment. Active erosion on the site is associated with roadways. There is evidence of past erosion, which appears to be stabilized or in the process of stabilizing. Structural and functional groups were within expectations. Invasive species were limited to red brome, prickly pear (*Opuntia sp.*), cholla (*Opuntia sp.*), and tamarisk. All of these species were present only occasionally and in limited abundance.

The Upland Health Assessment may be reviewed in the evaluation file.

5.2.3 Ground Cover

Ground cover data is not collected for Custodial allotments due to budget and staffing limitations.

5.2.4 Frequency/Trend

Frequency/trend data for Custodial allotments is not collected due to budget and staffing limitations.

5.2.5 Riparian

The BLM defines a riparian area as being at least .10 miles in length and containing riparian-obligate species such as Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Gooding's willow (*Salix gooddingii*), seep willow (*Baccharis sp.*), and sedges. There is no riparian habitat within the White Spring allotment.

6.0 Conclusion

Based on the analyses and supporting documentation referenced herein, resource conditions on

the White Spring allotment are as follows:

Standard 1. *Upland Sites:* Based on the indicators, Standard 1 is being met.

A Rangeland Health Evaluation was completed for the White Spring allotment on April 15, 2008. The evaluation indicated that there was a range from "Slight to Moderate" to "None to Slight" ratings for departure from the Ecological Site Description and Ecological Reference Areas. The Soil/Site Stability was within expectations. Gullies and/or rills were present and appear to be influenced by the road. Hydrologic Function was functioning at expected levels with the exception of increased runoff and erosion associated with the road. This could be remedied with the installation of waterbars or rolling dips along the road.

The functional structural groups showed none to slight departure from the ecological site guide. Plant species occurring on the allotment identified during the assessment include: bush muhly (*Muhlenbergia porteri*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), spidergrass (*Aristida ternipes*), purple three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*), red brome, globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), sida (*Sida sp.*), rattlesnake weed (*Daucus pusillus*), dalea (*Dalea sp.*), snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), catclaw (*Acacia greggii*), whitethorn (*Acacia polyacantha*), mesquite (*Prosopis sp.*), shrub oak (*Quercus turbinella*), palo verde (*Parkinsonia spp*.), prickly pear, cholla, fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), scorpion weed (*Phacelia crenulata*), shrubby buckwheat (*Eriogonum sp.*), verbena (*Verbena sp.*), chia (*Salvia sp.*), wait-a-minute (*Mimosa aculeaticarpa*), and four o'clock (*Mirabilis sp.*). All structural groups were in proportions within expectations of the ecological site guide.

Although annual production is low, Biotic Integrity appears to be intact. There was slightly more shrubs and succulents than would be expected and desired. Mesquite trees were more abundant than would be expected in the uplands and may indicate past continuous grazing pressure and/or lack of fire. The allotment has not been grazed over the last 20 years and current conditions likely reflect past land management and exclusion of fire.

The perennial grass component of the plant community has maintained species diversity and composition. Grass and shrub species composition and seed production should be appropriate for livestock and wildlife forage and habitat. The White Spring Allotment is within the Gila District, Aravaipa-Santa Teresa Fire Management Area, which is identified as an area, when the right conditions occur; appropriate to allow natural fires to play their historic role in reducing woody plants within the vegetation community.

Standard 2. *Riparian Wetland Sites:* Standard two is not applicable. The BLM defines a riparian area as being at least .10 miles in length and containing riparian-obligate species such as cottonwood, willow, baccharis, and sedges. There is no riparian habitat within the White Spring allotment.

Standard 3: *Productive and diverse upland and riparian-wetland communities of native species exist and are maintained.* Based on the indicators, Standard 3 is being met.

The desired resource condition for the White Spring Allotment includes the maintenance of a

diverse composition of native species to achieve multiple use objectives. The desired plant community objectives were set using the ecological site areas and summarized as functional-structure groups based on historic plant communities, which would maintain soil integrity and ecological function. These were developed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service and are listed in Table 5. The White Spring allotment appears to be within expected ranges of the functional-structure groups appropriate for the allotment.

Table 5. Percent Structure and Cover by Ecological Site.

Structure and Cover: Soil Surface Cover (%)														
			Basal Cover				Non-Vascular Plants	Biological Crust	Litter	Surface Fragments > 1/4 & <= 3"	Surface Fragments > 3"	Bedrock	Water	Bare Ground
Site ID	Precip. (in.)	Description	Grass/ Grasslike	Forb	Shrub/ Vine	Tree								
R038XA108AZ	12-16	Clayey Slopes	6-12	0-1	2-5	0-1	0	1-5	15-6	35-60	1-15	0	0	5-35
R038XA117AZ	12-16	Volcanic Hills	3-6	0-1	2-5	0-1	0-1	0-2	10-45	25-50	5-15	5-25	0	5-20
R038XA104AZ	12-16	Granitic Hills	2-5	1-2	1-2	0-1	0	0-1	20-50	25-50	1-15	1-15	0	10-50
R041XA107AZ	12-16	Loamy Slopes	8-15	0-1	1-2	0-1	0-1	0-5	20-50	15-45	0-5	0	0	15-40

7.0 Recommendations

Issue the grazing permit with the mandatory terms and conditions listed in table 6.

Table 6. Mandatory terms and conditions for the White Spring Allotment.

Allotment Number	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMS
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
46280	17	Cattle	03/01	02/28	92	Active	188

Other terms and conditions:

As a term and condition of this permit, you are required to do the following:

1. Submit a report of your actual use made on the allotment for the previous grazing period March 1 to February 28. Failure to submit such a report by March 15 of the year may result in suspension or cancellation of your grazing permit or lease.
2. The BLM is in the process of implementing the standards for rangeland health and guidelines for grazing management. This permit is subject to future modification as necessary to achieve compliance with the standards and guidelines (43 CFR 4180).
3. Permittees are required to maintain all range projects for which they have maintenance responsibilities.
4. With the exceptions of salt and or mineral blocks, supplemental feeding is not authorized on public lands unless prior approval is requested and given by the authorized officer.
5. Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed within one quarter (1/4) mile of water sources, springs, streams, and riparian habitats.
6. All troughs will be outfitted with wildlife escape structures to provide a means of escape for animals that fall in while attempting to drink or bathe.
7. This permit is subject to all terms and conditions found on the back side of this permit.
8. If in connection with allotment operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

Other Management Actions:

To reduce erosion, install water bars or rolling dips along roadways when completing any road maintenance activities.

8.0 Consultation

Prepared By/Staff Review: Signature

Jeff Conn, Natural Resource Specialist _____
Deb Morris, Recreation/Wilderness Specialist _____
Dan McGrew, Archaeologist _____
Gwen Dominguez, Rangeland Management Specialist _____
Bill Wells, Hydrologist _____
Dave Arthun, Rangeland Management Specialist _____

AUTHORIZED OFFICER CONCURRENCE:

_____ I concur with the conclusions and recommendations as written.

_____ I do not concur.

_____ I concur, but with the following modifications.

_____ _____
Scott Cooke Date
Field Office Manager

Literature Cited

Arizona Game and Fish Department [AZGF]. 2002. American Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum*. Unpublished abstract compiled and edited by the Heritage Data Management System, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ. 6 pp.

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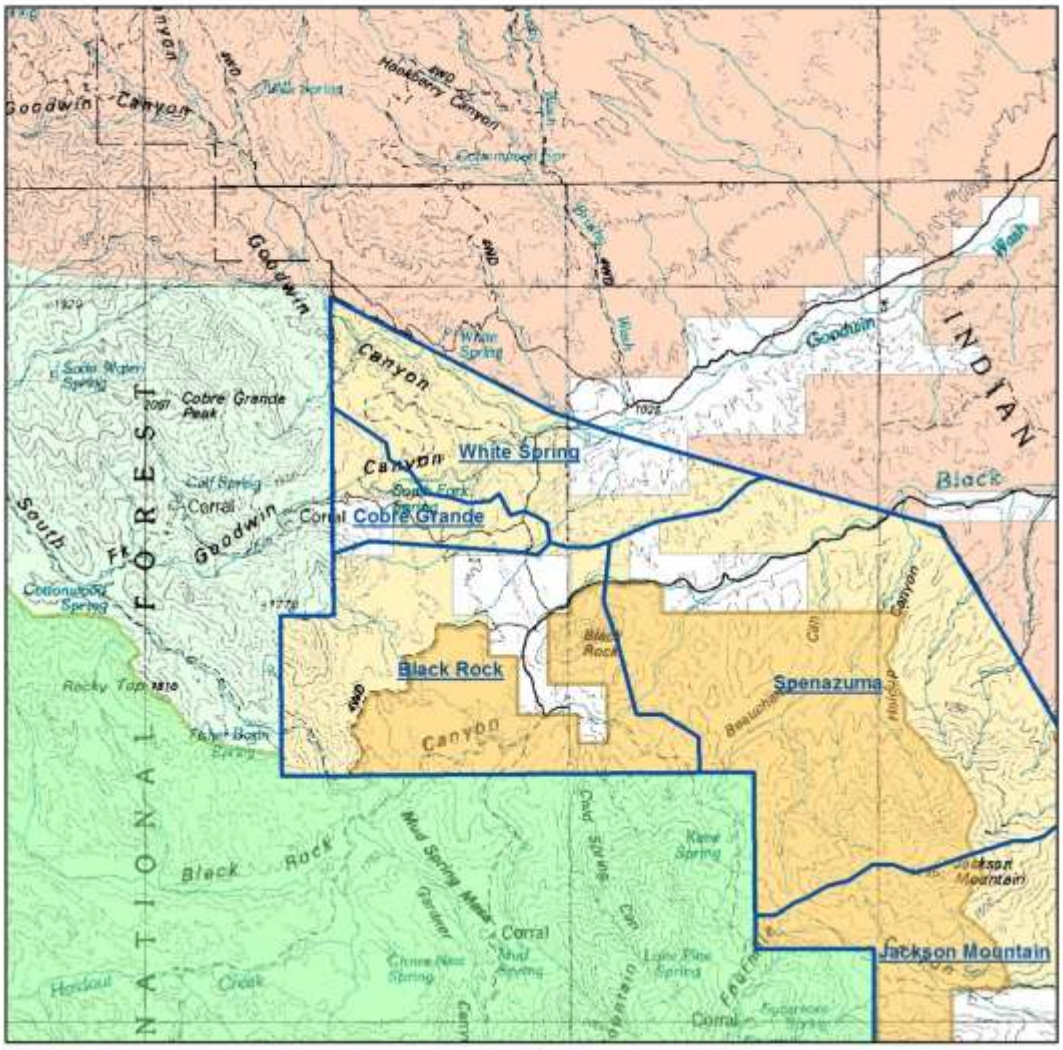
United States Department of Agriculture. 1981. Soil survey of Gila – Duncan Area, Arizona, Parts of Graham and Greenlee Counties. Soil Conservation Service. 175 pp., illus.

Map 1. White Spring Allotment.



SCALE 1:76,600

N W E S

0.85 0.425 0 0.85 1.7 2.55 3.4 Miles

Legend

- Private Lands
- State Lands
- State Wildlife Area
- City, State, County Parks
- County Lands
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- National Forest Lands (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- USFW Service, National Wildlife Refuges
- Indian Lands or Reservations
- BLM Wilderness Area
- Forest Service Wilderness Area
- NPS Wilderness Area
- USFW Service Wilderness Area
- BLM National Monument
- National Conservation Area
- Military Reservations/Corps of Engineers
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Arizona State Office
Land Status updated as of November 2012
Map Prepared: 8/29/2013

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Figure 1. White Spring Allotment Looking North.

Figure 2. White Spring Allotment Looking South.

Figure 3. White Spring Allotment Looking East.

Figure 4. White Spring Allotment Looking West.